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A Federal R&D Reorganization? Interest Rising

Wise insiders are scoffing at the notion that a broad reorganization of federal research activities—perhaps even the long-talked-of and generally scorned cabinet-level Department of Science—might ensue from the President's modest plan to merge the National Bureau of Standards into the National Science Foundation.

The Bureau-Foundation merger arises from the need to find a home for the Bureau if its parent agency, the Department of Commerce, is transformed into a Department of International Trade and Industry, as Mr. Reagan has proposed. But given the overnight appeal of science and technology as keys to economic rejuvenation, it is worth noting that in both the White House and the Congress, more than stray thoughts are being

of control or policy focus in his actions."

Possible solutions, described though not advocated, call for bringing together a variety of federal R&D activities that are now either freestanding or incorporated into mission-oriented agencies. Among these, in contrast to most previous reorganization scenarios, is the National Institutes of Health, "because of the economic implications of advances in the life sciences," says the White House issue paper.

Of the four options raised in the paper, the first calls for a Department of Science and Technology consisting of the R&D components of the Department of Energy, NASA, and the National Science Foundation. The options grow from there, culminating with a super department that takes in just about all federal R&D activities outside the Defense Department and Agriculture.

While White House aides insist that it's just a game—they're not even confident that the relatively simple NSF-NBS merger will ever happen—the view from Capitol Hill is a touch less certain about the never-never prospects.

(Continued on page 2)

Tinkering with Election Schedule At NSF's Top Policy Board—Page 8

directed toward a grander reordering of the federal government's sprawling research and development empire.

To be considered, too, is that there's a kind of volatility and unpredictability in the current politics of science-related matters, as evidenced by the Congress, Mr. Reagan, and his would-be Democratic successors furiously competing as champions of science and math education.

At the White House, where they insist that contingency planning doesn't necessarily mean a thing, the pros and cons of a major amalgamation of federal R&D activities are set forth in an "issue paper" prepared in May just in case it might be needed by the Cabinet Council that would deal with the matter. The Council, on Natural Resources, Science and Technology, and International Competition, hasn't asked for the paper, and White House aides sagely point out that the Department concept is abhorred by the Office of Management and Budget because departments can outperform scattered agencies in lobbying for money.

But the issue paper is noteworthy, not for what it says about science, but for what it says about the imagery gains that might be reaped from tinkering with the organization of R&D.

Thus, in regard to R&D, it notes that President Reagan has shown "strong leadership in this area, certainly the strongest since President Kennedy introduced the Apollo program. But he has been denied much recognition," it continues, "because of perceived lack

In Brief

White House Science Adviser George A. Keyworth has assigned a high priority to an objective that has eluded all his predecessors—getting a grip on the National Institutes of Health, which tends to do business directly with its friends on Capitol Hill. Keyworth, eager for more emphasis on rapidly advancing fields in the basic life sciences, has detailed two NIH staff members to his own staff, Carl Leventhal and Gordon Wallace.

Foreign students received over half the engineering doctorates awarded by American universities in 1981, a seven-fold increase over the past 20 years, according to a new report, Science and Engineering Doctorates: 1960-81 (NSF 83-309, 119 pages, available without charge, from NSF, Division of Science Resources Studies, 1800 G St. NW., Washington, DC 20550).

The Center for the Utilization of Federal Technology, designed to make it easy to find the products of federal labs, has been established by the Commerce Department. Its first publication, *Federal Technology Catalog*, 328 pages, is available for \$19.50 from the Center, which is part of the National Technical Information Service, Springfield, Va. 22161; tel. 703/487-4838.

...The Example of Centralized Foreign Systems

(Continued from page 1)

The House Science and Technology Committee, which, in the nature of things, is keen to expand its jurisdiction, has scheduled hearings by its Subcommittee on Science, Research, and Technology for July 19 and 21 on "Federal Organization for Science and Technology." At this writing, the Subcommittee was encountering difficulty in rounding up the vacationing elder statesmen of science sought as witnesses, but if the hearings are not held on those dates, they will be held not too long afterwards. Since 1980, Rep. George Brown (D-Calif), who is one of the most influential members of the Committee, has been pushing his own science reorganization scheme—the National Technology Foundation, reintroduced in this Congress as HR 481.

A background paper prepared for the hearings lists alternatives for reorganizing the structure of federal R&D. Starting with a choice of doing nothing—par for the option-paper genre—these range across a wide spectrum, as can be seen from the accompanying box.

Until recently, there was no effective counter to the standard argument that pluralism and lack of orchestration were the great strengths of American science and technology. But with industrial policy and planning no longer considered out of bounds in political dialog, it will be increasingly difficult to defend a research system that has undergone scarcely any serious organizational change since the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration was established in 1970.

In a listing of pro and con arguments concerning an R&D reorganization, the Congressional Research Service neutrally sets forth one that is likely to attract considerable political interest:

"Some of this nation's major techno-economic competitors, which are securing larger shares of the world's high-technology markets, have organizations which harmonize governmental and private-sector support and policy for science and technology better than does the United States. Centralization of Federal support for science and technology in the United States might engender development of similar successful activities here."—DSG

The following options for reorganizing federal R&D activities are cited in a paper prepared for the House Science and Technology Committee by the Congressional Research Service:

1. Leave current organizational arrangements unchanged.
2. Modify the Administration's proposal only slightly to provide the NBS with autonomy within the NSF, leaving a special "associate" director (distinguishable from the other assistant directors) for the NBS's functions. No other changes in the NSF or its organization would occur.
3. Organize the NSF into two groups with the NSF's basic science directorates as the core of one group and the NBS with the Engineering, Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR), Industry-University and other programs forming the second group. Two associate or deputy directors answering to one director and/or the Science Board would give both groups a fair degree of autonomy. The Science Board would have policy control over the entire institution.
4. Establish a National Technology Foundation as proposed in HR 481 to include NBS and some current elements of NSF (Engineering, SBIR, University-Industry programs, etc.). This would leave NSF free of responsibility for applied work.
5. Establish an independent agency for Science and Technology which would include NSF and NBS. A third component focusing on information and computer science/technology and including National Technical Information Service (NTIS) could also be incorporated. Other components such as a National Design Council, NOAA and, perhaps, even NASA could be included. Under this option the Science Board could be left as is, or replaced by a board at the agency level with broader responsibility and representation.
6. Establish a Cabinet-level Department of Science and Technology including NSF, NBS, NASA, NOAA, NTIS, etc.

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NIH's Senior Mandarins Mull Over Its Problems

Nothing official can be settled by the 16 senior eminences of biomedical science and politics who constitute the Advisory Committee to the Director of the National Institutes of Health, a little-noted body established in 1966 to help keep the Bethesda chief in touch with the outside community. They're merely advisers, and their thrice-yearly meetings with the Director and his senior staff work out as bull sessions with a loose agenda. But after a bit of warmup for their all-day sessions, they do talk a lot and freely, with the result that, for insights into the relationship between the biomedical research enterprise and its principal paymaster, the NIH, the meetings are a rare and valuable resource. (Members are listed in the accompanying box.) The following excerpts are from the most recent session, held June 20 at NIH, which was also attended by representatives of the institute advisory councils:

Ramey. I get the impression that we are assuming that...the money base is going to continue to be very tight....There is something very depressing to me... about assuming basically that however we divide up the money...that there is going to be less and less research going on in this country unless something happens and there is a major change to reverse the trends of the last few years....I get the general impression that the research community in the last few years has just rolled over and played dead more than they have in the past in terms of leadership and perhaps in terms of individual attempts to bring to the attention of the American people and to the Congress particularly...that our research community is going to become increasingly pinched...in terms of solving the problems of the health of this country...

Kornberg. ...it isn't recently that the scientific community has been mute. They have always been mute. It is typical that an investigator, when he hears that someone down the hall has had his grant cut off, will say, "Thank God, mine still has a year to go." So, I don't think we can look to the scientific community for help on this issue. They are not organized. They are not articulate, and largely they have been self-selected for being unconcerned about social issues....I agree with you that it is the responsibility of this group to state as clearly as you have that it is a national disaster to [reduce] the opportunities to improve our health, to increase our fund of knowledge. We [the Advisory Committee] have the manpower to do it, and it is nothing short of criminal to sit around and play games with the situation that is intolerable....It is in the tradition of American politics to provide information to the people who have the funds....It is often called lobbying.

The Director's Advisers

The following are members of the Advisory Committee to the Director of the National Institutes of Health, James B. Wyngaarden, who chairs the Committee:

William H. Danforth, Chancellor, Washington University
David D. DeWeese, MD, Portland, Oregon
Eugene M. Farber, Chairman, Dept. of Dermatology, Stanford University School of Medicine
Ray W. Gifford Jr., Head, Dept. of Hypertension and Nephrology, Cleveland Clinic Foundation
Barbara C. Hansen, Graduate Dean, Southern Illinois University
Arthur Kornberg, Professor, Dept. of Biochemistry, Stanford University School of Medicine
Mary Lasker, President, Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation
Irving H. Leopold, Chairman, Dept. of Ophthalmology, College of Medicine, UC Irvine
Vernon R. Loucks Jr., President, Baxter Travenol Laboratories, Deerfield, Ill.
Douglas D. McGregor, Director, Baker Institute for Animal Health, Cornell University
William S. Partridge, President, University of Utah Research Institute
Cornelius W. Pettinga, Executive Vice President, Eli Lilly and Co.
Estelle R. Ramey, Professor of Physiology, Georgetown University School of Medicine
Roy D. Schmickel, Chairman, Dept. of Human Genetics, University of Pennsylvania
Howard M. Temin, Professor of Oncology, McArdle Laboratory, University of Wisconsin
Samuel O. Thier, Chairman, Dept. of Internal Medicine, Yale University School of Medicine
Also attending the June 20 meeting of the Advisory Committee were representatives of NIH institute advisory councils, including the following:
Lewis Thomas, Chancellor, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center (National Advisory Council on Aging)
James E. Mulvihill, Vice President for Health Affairs, University of Connecticut Health Center (National Advisory Dental Research Council)

Ramey. These damn set-asides of funds [a statutory requirement for most federal research agencies to allocate R&D funds to small business firms] that should be going into research....We should have protested that very strongly on this committee...

Wyngaarden. As many of you know, Mr. [David] Stockman, [Director of the Office of Management and Budget], sent around a memorandum which advised federal witnesses that they were not to take advantage of the opportunity before Congress to propose any budget in excess of that proposed by the President....We are
(Continued on page 4)

...How to Get the Message to Capitol Hill

(Continued from page 3)

permitted to [answer] how much more money would it cost to fund an additional 1000 grants or 500 trainees... but were they to ask how much more money would you like to meet the things you would really like to do, we cannot answer an open-ended question of that sort.

Thomas. I do not believe...we are in a permanent fix as far as underfunding of NIH is concerned. I think administrations will change and Congress will change. We will get people back in the Congress who have the same attitudes toward this institution and its steady growth that was held by people like [the late Senator Lister Hill (D-Ala.) and Rep. John Fogarty (D-RI), both legendary backers of NIH]. For the time being, I think what has to be done is to keep the system alive and the way to do that is to stay in the middle ground [a reference to choosing between concentrating available resources on a limited number of researchers and spreading lesser

amounts among a larger number]. Jim [Wyngaarden], I think a great mistake could be made if you made the impression on the Congressional committees that you like it. I know that you can't say that you don't like it, but you don't have to say that you do like it, or at least you don't have to smile.

Wyngaarden. I am running out of straight faces.

Thomas. You have got to get through the next several years and survive.

Mulvihill. I am wondering whether...some of the experience and firepower and prestige around this table... can't be aligned to more aggressively be testifying alongside of you [Wyngaarden] and saying, "Here is what the Director is saying because he is doing his job, but we want you to know that the Advisory Council to the Director feels entirely different."

(Continued on page 5)

NIH Head Details Growing Bite of Indirect-Cost Charges

The verdict isn't yet in on whether the Administration will succeed in crimping the huge and growing share of research appropriations that university managers have been siphoning off for indirect costs. But with the subject at a boil—Congress overruled a 10-percent cut in indirect payments last year—numerous studies are underway, and they provide hard numbers on the scope of the diversion from lab to front office.

Perhaps the most telling of these reports is one issued by the National Institutes of Health, in response to a request by the House Appropriations Committee. Prepared under the supervision of NIH Director James B. Wyngaarden, who has repeatedly

expressed dismay at the share of NIH funds consumed by indirect costs, the report, which Wyngaarden presented last month to his Director's Advisory Committee, notes that indirect costs "have had preferred access to grant support dollars."

The reason for this, the report explains, is that indirect costs, though "reimbursed in strict accordance with a negotiated rate based upon the allowability and research relevance of particular expenditures... are not subject to further evaluation such as that which peer reviewers and agency staff invariably apply to proposed direct-cost expenditures."

Wyngaarden goes on to note that "In these times when the needs and opportunities to gain new knowledge in the life sciences far outstrip the funds which society realistically can provide, it seems more important than ever to support as many investigators as possible. It is also important to avoid the erosion in public confidence that could occur if all budget categories do not share in the adaptation to economic restraint."

Commenting on the accompanying table, Wyngaarden noted that "in terms of constant FY 1970 dollars, the support of direct costs remained essentially level from FY 1970 through FY 1982, in spite of the increasing complexity of research. Indirect costs during that same 13-year period rose more than 50 percent. The inevitable consequence of this trend," Wyngaarden said in his report to Congress, "has been that proportionately fewer dollars have been available each year to meet the direct costs of research."

Trends in Average Amount Awarded for NIH Traditional Research Project Grants in Terms of 1970 Dollars

Fiscal Year	Total Costs— Constant Dollars	Direct Costs— Constant Dollars	Indirect Costs— Constant Dollars
1970	\$36,894	\$28,740	\$ 8,154
1971	39,497	30,395	9,102
1972	41,817	31,657	10,160
1973	42,272	31,561	10,711
1974	44,186	32,781	11,405
1975	40,890	30,242	10,648
1976	40,666	29,576	11,090
1977	42,394	30,757	11,637
1978	42,889	30,937	11,952
1979	42,243	30,204	12,039
1980	41,778	29,619	12,159
1981	41,651	29,271	12,380
1982	41,986	29,144	12,842

...Wyngaarden: "A Political Process Out There"

(Continued from page 4)

Wyngaarden. I think the very restraints placed on the budget hearing would prevent me from responding to your suggestion.

Wyngaarden. ...my sense of the discussion is that the strongest expressions from the Committee would caution us against any systematic downward negotiations [of funds awarded for project support]...; that some small level of downward negotiation, as has occurred in years when there was no special policy for that, just to handle the friction in the system, has been quite acceptable. There is some sentimental sympathy, of course, for funding as many scientists as possible, but I hear the stronger expressions for opting in the long-term good of science...for funding the best science that can be identified by study sections as near to the study section recommended level as possible, and in the view that the very best science is done by the very best scientists.

Kornberg. ...none of us, with as much dedication as we have to quality science rather than mass science, feels competent enough to sit at any given time and identify the best science. I can cite many examples of people whose priority scores would exclude them from grants in previous years who went on to win major acclaim for very important discoveries...Science today is dictated by fashion, as much as ever, perhaps more so, and then the entrepreneurial skills that people have to be added to good science.

Wyngaarden. In 1972, indirect costs represented about 20-21 percent of the total award dollars; in 1982, it was 30 percent...

Temin. ...they are not reviewed in the same way. As far as I understand, indirect costs are audited. So, they are reviewed in the sense of an auditor [determining] whether there are receipts. They are not reviewed in terms of efficiency or whether they are necessary costs, the way a budget is reviewed by a study section. So, anything that has the effect of shifting costs from an indirect basis to a direct would be good in that sense because it would bring it more into review in the real sense of review of efficiency and need....[A study section can say that] this postdoc is not necessary. You can't say this amount of administration is not necessary.

Kornberg. We see administration proliferate because there has not been a peer review. Deans are appointed. Offices are created. They never went out and proposed to a peer-review group that these were essential needs that a university had. We have committees that are supposed to help us prepare grant applications and review them. Through 20 years of experience, they have done nothing but delay them.

Wyngaarden. ...we don't have the money to pay direct costs at the same increasing rate as indirect costs. Given that as a fact of life...is it appropriate that each year, the indirect-cost category has the first dollar and then what is left, is for direct costs?

Wyngaarden. ...one of the points I have tried to make today...is to outline what the degrees of freedom are under which we, as members of the NIH staff and members of the Administration, can, in fact, do...[T]he point I tried to make to various groups was that there is a political process out there. Every other field is taking advantage of it. The various organizations, whether it has to do with the American Rifle Association or environmentalists, or whatever the issue. And the biomedical-science community has to realize that that is the way that decisions are taken. They aren't taken because the NIH Director wants them.

Partridge. Every year, university faculty members should be educating their Congressional delegations.

US-Turkey Sign R&D Pact

Turkey and the United States have entered into their first formal agreement for cooperation in science and technology through a memorandum of understanding signed June 13 by representatives of the Turkish Technical Research Council and the National Science Foundation.

However, according to US officials, there's a long way to go before the agreement produces any projects or collaborative undertakings. The agreement is one of many of its kind that the US has signed with friends of one sort or another around the world as a cut-rate means of signifying support for a regime.

Scheduled to run for five years, the agreement provides for cooperation in basic and applied research, education, exchanges of scientists, and various other science-related activities. The signatories were Richard J. Green, Assistant Director of NSF's Directorate for Scientific, Technological and International Affairs, and Kemal Kafali, Chairman of the Turkish Council.

The program is eventually expected to spend "a few million over a few years," SGR was told, with the money coming from the Agency for International Development, and, possibly, the Turkish government. The first step will be a bi-national planning seminar, before the end of this year, it's hoped, but even that's not yet settled.

For additional information: NSF, 1800 G St. Nw., Washington, DC 20550; tel. 202/357-7631.

France: In Pursuit of an Elusive Computer Boom

Paris. The French government has made personal minicomputers one of its war horses in the modernization of industry and of the country's culture. However, after two years of uproar, progress is not notable; the French use data processing less than the Americans, obviously, but also less than the British and the Germans.

The new minister for Industry and Research, Laurent Fabius, has been quiet about his plans for electronics and research in general. Obviously, he needs time to become acquainted with the tangled multitude of projects on research, electronic development, data processing, and telecommunications launched or accelerated by his predecessor, Jean-Pierre Chevenement.

The caution demonstrated by the new Ministry chiefs is seen as evidence of their perplexity. Last year, great hopes had been based by a group of R&D projects gathered together under the name of "electronic network." The Ministry had set the goal of launching about a dozen collective research projects "Japanese style." But industry was put off by the red tape and delays in freeing up the funds. To calm everyone down, Minister Fabius put the electronic network on hold, with the exception of one project, a supercomputer. The paradox is that it is a computer whose main purpose is to serve the military. The Armed Forces would have preferred that it had remained secret.

The idea of a national supercomputer is not particularly welcomed by the French scientific community, which has had to suffer more than 15 years of nationalistic data-processing plans. For the first time since the launching of the first Computer Plan, in 1965, by General De Gaulle, researchers from the National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS) have publicly denounced—and even did so in their official publication—the strategy which forces them to use computers made by a French firm.

French laboratories have only one Cray 1 and even this was installed only during the last few weeks. It is hard to say if the relative backwardness is caused by chronic financial problems or if the buy-French requirements imposed by the Ministry for Industry and Research have resulted in a maladjusted and weak capacity.

The lack of large computers causes an underconsumption of data processing by French researchers, while the dearth of micro-computers is seen as evidence of a cultural lag. In 1983 the British bought 85,000 micros, the Germans 60,000, and the French less than 50,000. It is true that the English basically use their personal computers for video games, but these statistics irritate the French, who know that they were late with regard to hardware but believe themselves very competitive when it comes to software.

It is basically because of this that the day after his inauguration as President of the Republic, Francois Mitterrand gave the go ahead for the creation of a World Center for Data Processing, which was intended to attract to Paris the most talented researchers in micro-computers. But the dubious management of its founder, Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, caused the flight within the year of several imported superstars. Without losing any time, Servan-Schreiber changed his research center into a promotional one. "We had to refocus our program in order to face an explosion of demand with regard to education," he explained.

Actually, the refocusing was to the detriment of more ambitious goals such as making data processing available to the masses, including the Third World. A project started in Senegal has already been cut back. Meanwhile, the World Center has been launching initiatives and slogans promoting data processing as a remedy for unemployment. In May, Servan-Schreiber proposed "the creation of a national data-processing service reserved for college students to educate unemployed youth in data processing."

In June, he decided to focus on vacation spots, youth hostels, and so forth with plans for 2000 micro-computers to be distributed among them for use by young people on holiday.

The problem in putting these generous ideas into operation is that they require materials and money, both of which are scarce. Servan-Schreiber forcefully states that he depends on no one and constantly declares that he has the unconditional support of the President of the Republic. His Center and his program are, however, under the control of the Ministry of Postal Services, (Continued on page 7)

AEI to Study Tech Policy

The American Enterprise Institute (AEI), in Washington, has announced the initiation of a "multi-year project on international trade" that includes among its three major parts a section on Technology Policy and Economic Adjustment.

Heading up that part is Claude E. Barfield, AEI Resident Fellow in Science and Technology, formerly a Congressional aide and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development. According to an AEI announcement, the technology study will examine government R&D policies, public and private roles in the development of technology, and the organization of federal research activities.

The other two parts of the overall study are titled International Trade and Finance and Human Capital Development.

...EEC to Back \$750 Million in New Projects

(Continued from page 6)

which is one of the rare public agencies with a comfortable budget. Tighter control is on the way. The Postal Services have announced that they themselves are going to produce a micro-computer which is derived from the famous "electronic phone book," a very cheap terminal which, within about 12 years, should be in the homes of the nation's 20 million telephone subscribers. (The equipment is to be the equivalent of a micro low range like the Texas Instruments 90, for example.) The likelihood, of course, is that the Postal Services' patrons will be able to insist upon the utilization of their micro-computers to the detriment of more sophisticated materials.

As the promotional efforts for micro data processing become more expensive, they will have to be reduced by the World Center. After the summer vacations, the "vacation data-processing" operation (and the corresponding materials) will be taken over by another public organization, the Agency for Data Processing (ADI). The ADI's goal is to create about 1000 data-processing starter centers within two or three years.

The technocrats who most heavily suffer from data-processing delays in France are those on the Committee for the European Economic Community (EEC) in Brussels. After more than a decade of hesitation, those in charge of the Common Market have decided to undertake an interventionist policy with regards to industrial R&D. The sectors chosen for these first "nationalistic" maneuvers are those of technology and data processing. The EEC is about to invest \$750 million over five years, starting in 1984, in micro-electronics, word processing, and visual and analytical processing.

This project is to be a gathering together of operations in "precompetitive research," as is done in Japan, and must be approved by the European Parliament and its Council of Ministers by the end of the year. But there is little chance that the political organs of the Common Market will turn it down. The European Strategic Program of Research and Development in Information Technology (ESPRIT) is being so strongly supported by its initiator, the Viscount Etienne Davignon, Common Market Commissioner for Industry, that the governments of the 10 member countries will certainly agree to get involved in a 10-year program.

A preliminary phase in across-the-border research did precede the program. In 1982 a series of pilot operations was started which ends this June. The Common Market put \$10 million into research, primarily in computer-aided design, linking either a government or university laboratory of one country with an industry in another. Initially, there was the fear that by adding the international constraints, a checkmate would be guaranteed.

But this was not the case, at least at the level of interest raised in the scientific communities, where more than 200 projects were proposed, with requests totaling about \$100 million. Of these, 35 were chosen.

In addition, European industry was really interested in the scheme and seems to have decided to go ahead and create centers for common research. The Dutch Philips and the German Siemens have already gathered together 50 researchers specializing in integrated circuit technology. Siemens and the French CII-BULL are proposing the construction of a common data-processing laboratory which the English ICL could also join. A delicate question remains: can subsidiaries of American companies also participate in this program? This is the official reply of Viscount Davignon: we will have to await the outcome of the first undertakings to know if the officials in Brussels can manage things with as much subtlety as those in Paris and London.

The ESPRIT program is probably a little too late to drastically combat the technological gap which Europe suffers with America. But the interest that it has caused among industrialists and researchers has perplexed observers, particularly the technocrats in the French ministries. They have basically let the Common Market proceed rather than actually encourage it. But the Common Market has caused less uproar regarding its ambitions and has been much less pushy than the French Ministry for Industry and Research usually is.

Meanwhile, Laurent Fabius' new team is silent with regards to the press; it has also abstained from giving precise instructions to its various agencies, apparently in order to avoid interfering with the conduct of the laboratories and even more so in that of industry. Whether this reflects policy or puzzlement is difficult to say.—FS.

To the Editor

I was quoted [SGR Vol. XIII, No. 11] in answer to the question, "How are you dealing with the problems of young investigators getting started on research careers?" as follows:

"For a decade, it's been that about 12 percent of the new awards each year are for young investigators."

The sentence should read, "For a decade, it's been that about 12 percent of all investigators each year are new investigators that year."

Carl D. Douglass,
Director
Division of Research Grants
National Institutes of Health

Fast Shuffle at the National Science Board?

There's angry muttering in Reagan science-policy ranks at what's perceived as a ploy by an outgoing majority of Carter-appointed holdovers to maintain control over the two top posts on the National Science Board, the policymaking body of the National Science Foundation.

However, several officials of NSF and the Board dismiss the allegations as an outburst of paranoia that they trace back to a particular suite of the White House Science Office. In any case, there are curious events to be accounted for.

The Board, a part-time advisory body, consists of 24 presidential appointees—mainly senior scientists and academic executives, plus the NSF Director, ex officio. All the regular members are appointed for six-year terms, with one-third of the terms expiring every two years, on May 10. Come that date next year, Mr. Reagan will have an opportunity to appoint his second batch of members. The result would be a membership consisting of 16 Reagan appointees and eight Carter holdovers. It's generally agreed, however, that the Board has been devoid of partisan fissures, and most of Mr. Reagan's first eight appointments could have passed muster with the Carter Administration.

While the President appoints the members, the members elect the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Board. The occupants of those posts have a lot of influence over the Board's agenda, but perhaps more important than that, Congressional committees regularly invite the Chairman to sound off on a variety of science-related issues. It is in regard to those two top posts that the Reaganites are seething.

The Board, which meets nine times a year, has traditionally held its sessions on the third Thursday and Friday of the meeting month. At last May's meeting, however, the Board sympathized with members who must travel from afar and agreed to shift the meetings to the third Wednesday and Thursday of the month to avoid the crush of homeward travel on

Friday evenings. Another motive was said to be an interest in drawing Congressional attendance at the annual dinner meeting, which is held in May. Congress tends to go home on Thursday. There's also said to be interest in motivating prompt appointment of new members—something lacking in recent years.

However, without debate or anyone paying much attention, the Board let pass one exception to the new schedule: Next May's meetings will take place on the second Wednesday and Thursday—May 9 and 10. In the view of the raging Reaganites, the shift is for no other purpose than to enable the outgoing Carter-appointed majority to elect the Chairman and Vice Chairman before eight Carter appointments expire on May 10.

According to NSF's basic legislative charter, the election is to take place at the biennial May meeting—with the Chairman of the Board empowered to specify when in May.

SGR sought comment on the Reaganites' dour interpretation from Board Chairman Lewis Branscomb, Chief Scientist of IBM, but he was traveling abroad and unreachable. So, we turned to Vice Chairman Mary L. Good, who is Vice President and Director of Research for UOP, Inc., of Des Plaines, Ill. Sounding a bit amused by the inquiry, she said she didn't recall the source of the May schedule change, but noted that it was unanimously approved and that "it's not a naive Board."

For a different perspective SGR turned to a Board member who spoke freely but anonymously. The May schedule, he said, is the work of a "liberal subgroup on the Board." He saw the shift as the work of "connivers," but conceded that the Board usually performed harmoniously and without ideological splits.

The Board has often in the past been accused of passivity and a penchant for silly makework. This is the first time, however, that it's been touched by a suggestion of sharp maneuvering to counter a Presidential prerogative.

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